



LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY  
LOUISVILLE METRO BOARD OF HEALTH

GREG FISCHER  
MAYOR

KAREN COST, Ph.D.  
BOARD CHAIRPERSON

February 10, 2020

Louisville Metropolitan Caucus  
Kentucky General Assembly  
700 Capital Ave.  
Frankfort, KY 40601

Louisville Metropolitan Caucus Members,

The Louisville, Jefferson County Board of Health urges you to support HB129, which will fund Louisville Metro Department of Public Health and Wellness (LMPHW) at the minimum amount necessary to perform its statutory and public safety functions.

The Board of Health recognizes that passage of this bill will present some short-term challenges to Louisville Metro Government. However, adequately funding public health in Louisville will result in long term savings, as improving Louisville's social determinants of health will reduce the need for government spending in other areas, such as corrections healthcare. Together with Louisville Metro Government leaders, Dr. Sarah Moyer, our Public Health Director, has provided some minor suggested amendments that we hope will improve the legislation's impact in Louisville.

Additionally, foundational public health services such as population health, regulatory enforcement, emergency preparedness and communicable disease control protect against costly disasters such as uncontained disease outbreaks, the response for which costs far more than does prevention. For example, LMPHW's harm reduction program recently prevented the outbreak of HIV in a nearby Indiana city from spreading to Louisville, where an estimated 25,000 people could have contracted the disease. Had LMPHW not prevented the spread, the financial costs to Louisville Metro would have been astronomical.

The provisions of HB129 were painstakingly researched by the Kentucky Health Department Association and found to be the minimum necessary to sustainably keep Kentucky's local health departments operational. One provision addresses the caps on fees, which in the case of restaurants, can be as low as half the true cost administering the statutorily mandated inspections. The provision mandating one FTE per 5,000 residents would return LMPHW to recent, appropriate staffing levels. LMPHW has lost over 20 positions since its "gold standard" response to Louisville's Hepatitis A outbreak in 2018. Reinvestment in our public health and safety is imperative if LMPHW is to provide the same level of response to the next emergency.

The Louisville, Jefferson County Board of Health urges you to support HB129. Meeting this challenge now will enable Jefferson County to realize both the public health dividends, and the financial dividends, of an appropriately funded public health department sooner rather than later.

Sincerely,

Karen M. Cost, PhD  
Chair, Louisville Jefferson County Board of Health